

sports

Game is a run for the sun in Miami or Texas

Big Red hungry for oranges in Florida, not for Texas tamales

By Tad Stryker

Looking at it from Barry Switzer's point of view, it might be called "the game for stone crabs." But Switzer's comments about Saturday's game and the respective cuisine of Miami, Fla., and El Paso, Texas, are being more or less ignored by Head Coach Tom Osborne and the Nebraska team, Osborne said.

"I think it's strange that Barry arranged the whole Sun Bowl deal and then told us to go down there and eat tamales," Osborne said.

Judging by the way practice has gone this week, Osborne said he is confident of avoiding a trip to El Paso.

"I think we're well prepared," he said. "We've done all we can. I think we're going to play well, possibly the best game we play all year."

Osborne said that the defense had an especially good practice Wednesday.

"We've looked pretty good against the wishbone," he said. "The scout team has been giving us a good picture (of OU) and it's usually difficult to do that." Several freshmen have been moved to the scout team to add some speed, Osborne said.

"But you still have to be a step or two quicker on Saturday," he said.

Everyone healthy

The Huskers are in excellent physical shape, and should be at full strength this Saturday, Osborne said.

"Derrie (Nelson) is all right," he said. "Everybody's healthy and ready to play. We got through the contact part of the week without further injury, and we shouldn't have any problems tomorrow when we work out in sweats."

Osborne recalled last year's Husker-Sooner game, when both Andy Means and Russell Gary were lost because of injuries suffered during the game.

"We had to play for about a half without both of them," he said. "It hurt us a lot against both the pass and the run. We hope to stay healthy during the game this year."

Having enough time to prepare a defense against the wishbone is always a problem, Osborne said.

"You'd always like to have some time to get ready for it," he said. That's why Nebraska wouldn't allow ABC-TV to move the game up to Friday, he said.

"Then they (ABC) wanted to move the game to Dec. 6, but Oklahoma said no. They don't want to give us that much time to prepare."

Weather hurts OU

In the past, poor weather has cut into the Huskers' preparation time prior to the Oklahoma game. This year, the shoe seems to be on the other foot. The Lincoln area has had no precipitation this week, while Norman, has been covered with several inches of snow.

"We've usually got bad weather here (before the game)," Osborne said. "I guess this year we'll have to tell them to come up here to some warm weather."

Osborne was asked if he plans to pull any more trick plays out of his hat against the Sooners this year.

"Sure, we've got lots of 'em," he said with a smile. "We've been working on the guard-around a lot, plus the Bumeroosky." He said the Huskers had been able to find time to work against the wishbone, also.

Osborne said that, actually, trick plays or cocky-sounding predictions from Norman don't concern him much.

"All we're concerned with is playing up to our potential," he said. "People can talk all they want, but they've got to play us."



NU-OU telecast at 11

Kickoff for Saturday's Nebraska-Oklahoma game has been moved up to 11:35 a.m. because of ABC Television's decision to cover the game regionally. The network will begin coverage of the game at 11 a.m. The Husker game will be followed by the national broadcast of the USC-UCLA contest.

The OU-NU game will be shown to only a few parts of the country, however. All of the Big Eight states will see the game along with the Florida area. Most of the nation, according to ABC Sports, will see the Ohio State-Michigan game.

Nebraska fans who attend the game can watch a delayed broadcast. The ESPN Network (Lincoln Cablevision channel five) will replay the game three times throughout the week. The first showing will be at 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

In spite of numerous injuries, OU coaches expect 'heck of a game'

By Pat Beecham

Even though some Oklahoma coaches talk as if Oklahoma just isn't that good this year, there probably aren't a whole lot of Nebraska fans that feel sorry for the Sooners.

Oklahoma has beaten Nebraska eight out of the last nine years and has a 38-2 record for the month of November over the last 10 years. Even so, Sooner Coach Barry Switzer said that this year's Sooner team doesn't measure up to some other Sooner teams.

"I can't say we're that good by traditional standards in Oklahoma football," Switzer said. "I just don't think we're as good of a team as in the past."

Although Oklahoma may not be as good as some of their teams in the past, they were good enough to defeat Missouri last week without six starters. Defensive coordinator Rex Norris did have a few words of praise for the Sooners on their victory.

"It was a super effort considering we had six starters out," Norris said. "But Missouri was not as sharp as they could have been and we got a few breaks."

Three of the six starters held out last week were from the defensive unit. Two of the players, defensive end Mike Weddington and safety Ken Sitton, are not expected to play this week either.

Not a single-star team

But this year's Oklahoma defense is not built around one or two players, Norris said.

"We don't have any superstars like the people we've had in the past," Norris said. "There aren't any Rod Shoates, George Cumby or Selmons. We don't have the dominating players. We have to get by a lot on effort."

Switzer also said the Sooner offense is not as good as it has been in the past.

"Last year Billy Sims made the difference for us, but now he's with the Detroit Lions," Switzer said.

With the departure of Sims, halfback David Overstreet has taken over the bulk of the Sooner running game.

Overstreet has rushed for 659 yards so far this year which is fifth in the conference. He is also tied with Nebraska's Jarvis Redwine for the number one spot in the nation in average yards per rush, averaging 7.2 yards.

Quarterback J.C. Watts and fullback Stanley Wilson are no slouches in the Sooner backfield. They have rushed for 540 and 524 yards respectively and Watts is fifth in the nation in scoring, averaging 8.7 points a game.

Key factors

Norris said he thinks three factors will decide the game's outcome.

"The key to these games are always penalties, turnovers and the kicking games," Norris said.

Switzer also said the Sooners will have to play errorlessly to win the game.

"We're going to have to keep down our mistakes and be able to move the ball against their defense," Switzer said.

Besides Weddington and Sitton, defensive end Steve Whaley, running back Jerome Ledbetter, tight end Forrest Valora, Overstreet and Wilson also did not play against Missouri either.

These players are expected to be able to play by Saturday but will probably be a little sore.

As far as playing Nebraska in Lincoln, Norris said he doesn't feel it is that big of a factor to the players.

"You'd have to talk to the players, but I don't think it makes any difference where we play in a big game like this," Norris said.

"It's more of a stimulant to the fans and the press than to the players," Norris said. "We could play in an empty stadium and still have a heck of a game."

Quinn leads Watts in Big Eight passing stats

Nebraska quarterback Jeff Quinn continues to lead the Big Eight in passing efficiency, according to the statistics released from the conference office this week. The conference rates quarterbacks on a point system which takes into account completions, interceptions and total yards.

Quinn received 160.5 points, far above Oklahoma's J. C. Watts with 121.8 points. Quinn's 158.4-yard average in total offense ranks second behind Missouri's Phil Bradley.

Third-string I-back Roger Craig has regained the lead in Big Eight scoring, with an average of nine points per game.

Jarvis Redwine is averaging 129.2 yards per game, placing second among all-purpose runners. Redwine also is third in rushing with a 120.9 average.

Dave Liegl continues to hold onto the number two spot in punt returns with an eight-yard average. Larry Crawford of Iowa State has an 8.2 average to lead the conference.

Nebraska's Todd Brown has a total of 416 yards to come in fourth among the league's pass receivers.

In team statistics, the Big Red continues to lead in six of the nine categories. The Huskers lead in rushing offense with an average of 384.7 yards per game, and

scoring offense with an average of 42.2 points per game.

Nebraska is also tops in rushing defense, allowing only 70.1 yards per game. The Huskers' 7.2 average in scoring defense also leads the Big Eight.

The Cornhuskers are the leaders in both total offense and total defense with averages of 518.6 and 202.5, respectively.

In this week's major college football polls, Nebraska remained third in the UPI coaches' poll and fourth in the AP sportswriter's poll. Both wire services listed Georgia as number one and Notre Dame in second place.